



## Causes of regional conflicts and wars

### Examples: Southeast Anatolia and Northern Iraq

Author: Necdet Ipekyuz  
Turkish Medical Association

Date: 1998

#### ***Regional Conflict***

Due to Turkey's specific political system, all those who have come to government, have not taken serious precautionary preventative measures against human rights violations. Turkey has all the institutions needed to make a democratic state, such as parliament, president with executive powers. According to the constitutions elections are held every five years hence, government is formed.

In spite of its outward appearance and resemblance, it is difficult to put forward and claim Turkish state as being democratic. The fundamental reason for having human rights violations on such an extensive scale, is because the "outward appearance" is very different to "reality".

The 1982 constitution and other fundamental laws that were prepared by the military establishment who carried out the coup on the 12 of September 1980, antidemocratic. Turkey's fate, instead of being decided by the parliament and government is in a sense decided by the above mentioned constitution and the National Security Council, which does not exist in any democratic nation. In practice Turkey has elections and forms governments however none has power.

Within the existing legal and political framework, changes to human stance, should not be expected. In Turkey there exists powerless and inadequate civilian rule against powerful - irresponsible military authority.

At present although, state organised criminal organisations have come out into the open and are able to defend what they do, public remains indifferent. An accident brought out into the open the Susurluk scandal. Those who supported a minute of darkness for illumination action, are not reacting to these people. Authorities are showing the above people as heroes. Under the state of emergence region, the new generation and people, not knowing the alternative are in turn identifying themselves with the state of emergence conditions. Organisations able to educate and have activities directed in bringing about change to the present situation, or to create the desire for change are being either closed down or prevented from carrying out their activities. People of the region are being cut off from production. With migration, unproductive and consumption oriented masses are coming out into the open. Psychological problems are on the rise. As the village-guard system is increasing the hatred and animosity between people has given way to organise crime and unjust profiteering as the heroin trade and attacks rise. At the same time the village guards are moving away from production, under tight control training is given and they armed. There is no activity that takes into consideration their future.

Those who have confessed are increasingly organised into special forces unit. Today it has become necessary to defend, human rights defenders. Their economic situation and problems of their relatives are on the increase. Human rights violations are wide spread, and those affected are increasing. There are bans on newspapers, to attain news, to



disseminate news, to meetings and rallies. Human rights Associations are being shut down, also a decrease in health, education and poverty continues to increase. In Turkey when the South Eastern region is mentioned, the tragicomedy is played out, with hands placed over the ears, eyes, and mouth. Everything said about Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Greece can not be mentioned about ones own country. Specifically when looking at the problem mentioned different views come to the surface, however exchanging views through peaceful means is the best option. What is meaningful and just is peace and democracy. In due consideration, my opinion is that steps towards the establishment of democracy, will bring about a solution to many of the problems. Kurds look on to the international community with suspicion, from time to time the problem is taken into consideration, however when interests are put at the forefront the problem is overlooked. What should be preferred, human rights or interests. The fact that Kurds live in different cities, under different systems may make the solution difficult, but Kurds know what is reasonable and realistic. A reasonable solution can be achieved by the international community and not just by the Kurds themselves.

The problem is not just the South Eastern region 20-30 percent of the Kurdish population are living in the cities in the West. Due to a increase seen in the problem, population of many European nations are increasing. One should not turn a blind eye to the fact that the problem affects Turkey and international community.

Before anything else Kurds want an environment which is free of political and cultural oppression. Struggle given to attain basic human rights is given widespread recognition. We know that the militarist understanding and administration is not moving towards a solution or to resort to international law as the basis for a solution. As long as this understanding continues it is impossible to establish democracy. The present situation is effecting all those living in Turkey, and even neighbouring countries and Europe.

Turkey's future enemy is fear, paranoia and nationalistic attacks by the masses of today. In relation to war, physicians have a ethical responsibility. Research needs to be carried out in order to identify reasons for the present war and consequences of it, also to put into practice preventative measures in response to psychological mechanisms that trigger individuals acceptance of war as being natural. A step towards peace can begin by physicians in all countries through cooperation could direct government expenditure used for war to solve hunger It is not enough to have disarmament on the agenda, also to identify the reasons for the war and solution need to be found. To be against the war and for peace will undoubtedly disturb some sections. This should not be a reason in itself to pursue peace.

Democracy, peace and human rights issues are not only internal affairs of any country. Turkish authorities are holding meetings ,with Kurdish leaders, giving assistance however, those who live on their own land are not allowed any self expression.

Problems faced today, concern the health of the people. Needless to say, obvious result of the war are disease, disabilities, and death combining to create health problems for the people. Everyone is occupied with symptomatic treatment. Health problems are growing, and the spread of disease is on the rise and the need for treatment and rehabilitation is much needed.

The region where armed conflict is ongoing receives assistance in the form of health, educational equipment, food and clothing from various NGO's. There isn't enough effort being put into practice in bringing about a peaceful solution to the armed conflict. There



should firstly be an initiative for peace and in the process aid should flow. If peace is not seen as an option then armed conflict will be accepted.

The image of IPPNW is seen as explicitly being made up of physicians and addressing issues related to themselves and their advanced countries. We had become acquainted with IPPNW in 1996, gradually understanding of its importance is developing as days go by our relationship is developing in the process we see the common problems faced by all. Support came from IPPNW in regards to Dr. Kizilkan's situation also visits by them informed us of its aims.

IPPNW's opposition to war is shared by people in general, and its support for a peaceful resolution, efforts to work towards the reduction of military expenditure has gained itself respectability and honour amongst the physician community. As it proves its stance has not been bipartisan and taken an international collective approach.

- IPPNW should lead an initiative in finding a peaceful resolution, and support any attempts.
- To be able to research cause and solution and share the outcome with other physicians and organisations similar to itself, also directing efforts to lobby governments.
- Efforts can be directed towards the setting up of a international conference where all dimensions of the problem can be put on the agenda under the guidance of United Nations.

Initiative by physicians for peace; Physicians and other health professionals are the ones that witness critical cases, in day to day living. Physicians, will be aware of psychological impact of war will not disappear even if peace is achieved.

- Naturally those physicians in support of peace need to initiate efforts in favour of peace. Solution can be found without taking sides and being independent and abiding by the universal declaration of human rights.
- Peace initiator being impartial- without taking ideological and political sides needs to give consideration to universal human rights.
- Independent; There needs to be a distance between those who are the initiators and governments, political institutions.
- Universal approach; adhere to universal human rights in regards to cultural, ethnic, racial, religious and political factors.
- Law; to abide international law.

To lead a healthy life style peace is a must. Real peace can only be achieved when fear of war does not exist. The fear of war is a major obstacle in nations establishing just and fair society.



### ***According To The Reports Prepared By The Human Rights Association (Ihd)***

Number of people who have migrated:	3,000,000	
Number of villages forcefully evacuated:	3158	( July 1998, vice Prime Minister)
Number of village guards:	65.000	
	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>
Confiscation of newspapers and books	278	275
Disappearance	66	22
Extra judicial executions	223	238
Loss of lives in battle	2514	1300

### ***Research Done By The Diyarbakir's Regional Lawyers Bar***

Turkey's constitution is made up of 177 sections. Indirectly 22 of these sections restrict basic right of the Kurdish people.

Some examples:

- children can not be given Kurdish names
- Kurdish surname
- Names of places ( villages, cities, rivers)
- To be educated in Kurdish
- It is forbidden to mention the existence of Kurds as a distinct people ( Ismail Besikci)
- Forbidden to publish magazines, newspapers and broadcast on radio or T.V Kurdish
- To form political parties, cultural organisations concerning the Kurdish issue.